

## Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 FDRE-00 EB-07 PA-02 PRS-01

IO-13 MED-03 L-03 SCA-01 SCSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 NSC-05 CG-00 DOTE-00 AGR-10 SP-02 SS-15

INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /097 W  
----- 122852

O 252100Z AUG 76

FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2380

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

SECDEF IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MARTINIQUE 0354

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AEMR, FW

SUBJECT: GUADELOUPE VOLCANO ACTIVITY

REF: MARTINIQUE 347

1. DURING 24 HOUR PERIOD ENDING MIDNIGHT 24 AUG OVER 1000 MINOR TREMORS WERE REGISTERED IN BASSE TERRE NEAR THE VOLCANO. THIS IS THE HIGHEST NUMBER YET REGISTERED FOR ANY 24 HOUR PERIOD AND COULD BE INTERPRETED AS SIGN THAT A MAJOR ERUPTION IS IMMINENT. HOWEVER, GUADELOUPE AUTHORITIES TOLD US THIS AFTERNOON THAT AS FAR AS THE EXPERTS ARE CONCERNED THE OVERALL SITUATION HAS NOT CHANGED AND THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE AN ERUPTION IS ANY CLOSER NOW THAN A MONTH AGO.

2. WE SPOT CHECKED THE CLUB MEDS IN GUADELOUPE TODAY AND FIND THAT U.S. TOURISTS ARE NOW DECISIVELY AVOIDING VISITING THEM WITH 120 AT ST. ANNE AND 110 AT DESHAIES. ON THIS BASIS, WE ESTIMATE THERE ARE NOT MORE THAN 300-325 AMERICANS NOW IN GUADELOUPE AND ALL OF THEM ARE SO FAR REMOVED FROM THE VOLCANO THAT THEY WOULD ONLY BE ENDANGERED IF AN ERUPTION TOOK PLACE WHICH DWARFED ANY OTHER IN HISTORY. ALONG THIS LINE IT MAY BE WORTH  
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KEEPING IN MIND THAT POINTE A PITRE AND ST. ANNE ARE 15-20 MILES

FROM THE VOLCANO. WHEN MOUNT PELEE ERUPTED IN 1902, FORT DE FRANCE, SOME 17 MILES DISTANT, WAS TOTALLY UNTOUCHED, AND THE PELEE'S RADIUS OF DESTRUCTION EXTENDED AT THE MOST TO THE TOWN OF ST. PIERRE, SOME 5 MILES DISTANT. ALL U.S. CITIZENS ARE CLEARLY OUT OF THE ZONE OF DANGER IN GUADELOUPE AND GIVEN THE EVACUATION OF ALL CIVILIANS IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF BASSE TERRE, EVEN AN IMMENSE ERUPTION IS UNLIKELY TO PRODUCE DEATHS, EITHER AMONG AMERICANS OR FRENCH. WE CITE THE FOREGOING BECAUSE OF THE TONE OF SOME MEDIA REPORTING WHICH SUGGESTS THAT WHEN (AND IF) THE SOUFRIERE DOES GO OFF, THE DESTRUCTION IS LIKELY TO BE UNIMAGINABLE.

3. I PLAN FEW DAYS VISIT GUADELOUPE STARTING 27-28 AUG TO GET A BETTER VIEW OF CURRENT PROBLEMS. I WILL TAKE OCCASION TO DISCUSS WITH PREFET ANY PROBLEMS HE FORESEES, ESPECIALLY WITH USCIT EVACUATION IF THAT EVER BECOMES NECESSARY. WILL KEEP DEPARTMENT INFORMED.  
SHACKLETON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REPORTS, NATURAL DISASTERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 AUG 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976MARTIN00354  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760324-1420  
**From:** MARTINIQUE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Line Count:** 79  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 MARTINIQUE 347  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** harterdg  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 09 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <09 APR 2004 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <21 JAN 2005 by harterdg>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** GUADELOUPE VOLCANO ACTIVITY  
**TAGS:** PINT, AEMR, SWEL, FW, US  
**To:** STATE  
PARIS  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006